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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

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From Turkey to Nigeria to Iraq...

Imperialist Strategy Drives Atrocities

On May 13, 301 miners died in a preventable disaster in western Turkey. Like the girls taken captive this month in Nigeria, or the garment workers killed a year ago in Bangladesh, or the workers slain by U.S. imperialism in Iraq and Afghanistan, they were victims of capitalism and its relentless drive to maximize profits. For capitalist bosses in the U.S. and around the world, the lives of workers have no value except for surplus value — the difference between the value that workers produce and what they are paid. Since the ruling class holds absolute state power and controls the factories and other means of production, the working class is enslaved by the profit system. This will change only when we smash these bosses, eliminate the profit system, and seize state power. Only under communism will workers become society's first concern.

U.S. imperialists, the worst mass murderers in history, condemn or ignore atrocities according to their strategic needs. When Turkish bosses killed the miners of Soma, spurring militant protests, U.S. media — serving their ruling-class owners — covered the story in self-righteous detail. After Islamic forces kidnapped more than 250 girls in Nigeria, Michelle Obama took over her husband's weekly video address to express her "outrage and heartbreak." But a mounting wave of sectarian bombings in Iraq, where nearly five thousand civilians have been slaughtered so far this year, has received hardly any mention by the rulers or their pressrooms. If anything, they have encouraged violent defiance of the Shiite regime in Baghdad by allowing ExxonMobil to make oil production deals with Kurdistan and the Sunni Nineveh province.

Why the discrepancy in reporting? It's explained by the sharpening rivalry among the world's leading powers: a declining but still preeminent U.S. empire; a resurgent Russian ruling class; and a rising Chinese military and economy. Ultimately headed for global conflict, this imperialist dogfight reaches far beyond the hot spots in Ukraine and the South China Sea.

Profits Throw Safety Out the Window

Profit-hungry Turkish coal barons were exposed in the energy industry bulletin OilPrice.com (5/16/14), which reported that mine owner Alp Gurkan "boasted in 2012... that his company had reduced the cost of coal production from $140 to $24 per ton." Gurkan managed the feat by throwing safety measures out the window. But as the U.S. media plays agonizing images of bodies emerging from the Soma coal pit, their aim is less to blame Gurkan than to undermine Recep Erdogan, Turkey's president. Although Turkey has been a member of NATO since 1952, it declined to join the U.S.-led protest against Russia's annexation of Crimea and even increased its energy imports from Russia. With a faltering Turkish economy and mass protests in the street, U.S. rulers now consider Erdogan's corrupt regime unreliable.



Workers battle cops in protest of mine disaster in Turkey.

Last year, *Foreign Affairs*, the arch-imperialist journal representing U.S. finance capital and its Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) think tank, complained that Turkey made "a fateful decision to choose a Chinese HQ-9 T-LORAMIDS missile defense system over Raytheon and Lockheed-Martin's Patriots" (5/15/14). Erdogan also cancelled a NATO-sponsored naval modernization drive. In the wake of Vladimir Putin's aggression in Ukraine, *Foreign Affairs* (and its main backers, ExxonMobil and JP Morgan Chase) worried that Turkey had "no reassuring plan to counter Russia's expansion of the Black Sea fleet."

Turkey's loyalty to NATO is of huge importance to U.S. strategists. Shortly before Chuck Hagel was named Secretary of Defense, as head of the Atlantic Council think tank he published a 2013 report that named Turkey, Brazil, India and Indonesia as "democratic" military counterweights to Russia and China in coming decades. In other words, Turkey fills the Middle East slot on the Pentagon's roster for global war.

Finance Muslim Millionaire, Attack Muslim Immigrants

There's a reason why images of an Erdogan aide kicking a Soma protester played endlessly in U.S. newspapers and on television networks. Yet U.S. cops beat working-class black and Latino youth hundreds of times a day with no media attention. Cop attacks on Muslim immigrants, amid the rise of anti-Muslim racism, is ignored. But with U.S. rulers possibly readying to oust Erdogan, Turkey is a different case. According to the *Economist*, Erdogan's critics, "now led by Fethullah Gulen, Turkey's most influential Muslim cleric, who commands an empire of schools and media outlets from self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania, will seize on the Soma tragedy" in Turkey's presidential election in August (5/17/14).

U.S. bosses have patiently nurtured Gulen's movement as a pro-U.S., moderate Islamic force. CIA bigwigs got Gulen his green card; a former high-ranking Turkish intelligence official described the movement as a CIA front that sheltered more than one hundred U.S. agents in Central Asia in the 1990s. Today the U.S. Department of Education pours millions in grants into Gulen's vast charter school network. Back in Turkey, Gulenists have

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JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

OUR FIGHT

✯**Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.**

✯**Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.**

✯**Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.**

✯**While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.**

✯**Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.**

✯**Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.**

✯**Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.**

✯**Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.**

✯**Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.**

✯**Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!**

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

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infiltrated the security apparatus. Meanwhile, undercover police are sent into mosques in New York and New Jersey to terrorize Muslims into becoming informants for the bosses' fraudulent "war on terror."

Africa Command Humanitarian? Who's Kidding Who?

In Nigeria, U.S. rulers are manipulating the Boko Haram kidnap crisis with similarly cynical motives. The mass abduction opens the door for military action in Africa's most populous and oil-rich nation. The U.S. imperialists' hidden agenda is to plant Africom, the Pentagon's Africa Command, in a country that has been reluctant to embrace it. Africom military "advisors" arrived in Nigeria in mid-May to "save the girls," even as they launched drone strikes in other Muslim countries and killed innocent children.

Of course, U.S. rulers hide the fact that their Middle East allies are financing Boko Haram: "The French intelligence services pointed out last week that their reports have long since 'pointed out that...Boko Haram had received the backing of the oil monarchies.'" (*le Canard enchaîné*, 5/21).

The bosses' public relations crusade in Nigeria is at odds with their exploitation of women in the U.S. and worldwide. Women are paid less than men for comparable work. They are treated as sex objects in the popular media and in the U.S. military, where sexual attacks are epidemic. U.S. companies freely exploit women garment workers in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia. And the U.S. government uncritically backs Middle Eastern oil kingdoms that not only oppresses women citizens, but also force women migrants from Asia into virtual slavery as domestic workers, creating a multi-fractured working class entrenched in sexism.

Africa is vital to U.S. imperialist interests. In March 2007, just after President George W. Bush authorized Africom, *Foreign Affairs* called its creation "long overdue in light of U.S. dependence on Africa's oil, its concern over radical Islamist groups targeting the region, and the continent's identity as an arena for intense diplomatic competition with other states with global ambitions, like China" (5/3/07). The command was conceived as a blueprint for an imperialist task force.

In short, U.S. bosses' crocodile tears over murdered miners and kidnapped teenagers are a cover for their incursions into Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. (While the U.S. has launched thousands of killer drones, the Pentagon has barely flown a single search mission over Nigeria.) With little U.S. working-class support for the rulers' so-called War on Terror, they need workers and especially the youth — their prospective soldiers — to buy into this humanitarian sham and back a pro-imperialist movement.



Remember the "humanitarian" U.S. mission in Yugoslavia that bombed and killed tens of thousands and devastated the region's infrastructure? It also established a permanent military base in Kosovo with 14,000 troops on hand for future forays to protect U.S. bosses' profits. Or how about the two wars for "democracy" in Iraq that killed or displaced more than five million Iraqis? The payoff was control for Exxon Mobil over the vast West Qurna oil field.

Build an International PLP

Progressive Labor Party is fighting to build an international communist movement that will build solidarity with the victims of imperialism in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and throughout the world. Fighting to destroy the profit system is the way to show real concern for exploited workers and their children, from the mines of Turkey to the forests of Nigeria.

We must build PLP into a force that can destroy capitalism and erect a communist society free of bosses and profits, of racism and sexism and imperialist wars that murder millions. This is the road to ending the murder of miners and the kidnapping of schoolchildren. Join PLP and the fight for our lives and our future generations!✪

Invade Hospital, Hit Bosses' Attack on Retirees' Funds

PHILADELPHIA, PA, May 7 — "Here we go again!" Venetta said as 50 Local 1199C Hospital Workers Union retirees marched spontaneously to Jefferson Hospital demanding the hospital bosses stop their attacks on our union Benefit and Pension Funds. We're older now so we marched a little slower, several with canes, several with oxygen tanks.

Forty years ago Venetta and many of these workers broke the law and filled up buses headed to jail to bring in this union and its benefits. Now retired, Venetta and the rest of us don't want to give up pension and health benefits that we worked for and that help keep us alive and out of complete poverty. But as many of us see it, the capitalist economic crisis is deepening and all the small wars promise to become bigger ones.

Because the capitalist class rules the government, no matter who's in the White House, all the improvement Venetta and our class fought decades to achieve are being taken back. *Here we go again!* What could be more important or a more organic part of this fight — *not an outside issue* — than PLP's call for the working class to get off the capitalist merry-go-round and fight for communist revolution, where the working class runs the government for an equal society?

Our initial plan was to confront a Jefferson boss from Personnel. However, Personnel relocated to a more secure building away from the hospital. Its previous location was easily accessible and the target of many past marches. Is that why Personnel's now on the ninth floor of a guarded building? Personnel refused to allow the 50 of us up to their office and refused to come down to meet us. So, we held a meeting in the lobby.

Then we decided to march to Jefferson Administration in the main hospital building, enabling 1199C members at work to see us. Apparently Jefferson security is a little rusty because as slow as we moved — and although we had to wait while everyone went to restrooms (remember we ain't young!) — we still beat Security to the Executive Administration offices and filled the waiting area and hallway outside.

A Jefferson Vice-President came out to reprimand us but quickly regretted that decision. The retirees shouted him down. One retiree in particular, Jewel, all five feet of her, simply yelled in his face, "I need my medicine! I need my medicine!" repeatedly and loudly until the over-six-foot Vice-President actually seemed about to cry. When another Security Lieutenant rushed into the office, Jewel spun around and yelled, "I know your mother! I know your mother!" The security officer retreated. After a period of yelling and screaming, the Vice-President promised to arrange a meeting and took contact numbers for the retired shop stewards who led the march.

The stakes in this fight are dire. Our union is multi-racial — black, white, Asian and Latino. We're all hurting. But this attack is particularly racist and sexist because this union is predominantly black and women, who suffer the worst health and healthcare under this system. If Jefferson and the other hospital bosses succeed in destroying our Benefit and Pension fund it will kill many union members and amount to outright murder.

Venetta's declaration of "here we go again" demands that we get out of capitalism's losing game. The capitalists run the government, they hold state power with *a dictatorship of the bosses*. We need a workers' government, *a dictatorship of the working class*. Our future actions in this fight must have the long-term goal of workers joining PLP to build for communist revolution, for a society that abolishes wage slavery. We need a society where older workers, all workers, don't suffer poverty and starvation, where workers get the medicine they need simply because they need it! (To contact PLP call 267-319-3515.)✪

Low-Wage Workers Need Communist Revolution!



NEW YORK CITY, May 7 — More than 1,000 low wage workers and their supporters jammed into Riverside Church tonight, in a "Service for Low Wage Workers." The service was billed as "We Are All Workers!" The very integrated and international crowd of women and men were in high spirits, feeling their unity and ready for a fight. The speakers included fast food, airport, retail and car wash workers. CHALLENGE was sold.

The rally was mainly organized by SEIU, United NY, and the various unions involved in the different organizing drives. The idea was to rally 25 clergy from around the city to give "moral authority" to the campaign to raise the minimum wage. The low wage workers who spoke were given two-minutes each, and if they went over, someone was there to tap them on the back. The clergy, on the other hand, preachers, rabbis, priests and imams, couldn't shut up when given a microphone and a big crowd. Throw in the head of the NY Central Labor Council and the Speaker of the NY City Council and workers were eager to get out of there and on the buses taking them home.

The class struggle may be heating up a bit, and the unions and Democratic Party are looking to increase their numbers by targeting low-wage workers. In the process of organizing them, they are leading workers away from communist revolution and into the arms of the imperialist war-makers and their religious lackeys. We have to do better at fighting for the political leadership of these workers. The union leaders want to win mostly black, Latino, Asian and women workers to settle for a wage that might put them just above the poverty line. PLP wants to abolish wage slavery with communist revolution.✪

Red Eye on Two Movies:

Expose Mandela; Exploitation in the Sugar Fields

PLP Saturday night movie events at Roxbury Community College have developed from social events to serious base-building, with friends joining with us to learn and discuss our ideas, based on the films. The discussions have been very sharp and informative: Everyone who came with us knows we fight for communism, and the movies we chose open up real discussion. Multiracial and multigenerational groups of 20 to 30 have attended.

The February movie was John Pilger's "Apartheid Did Not Die," a documentary of post-apartheid South Africa that shows how Mandela and his successors in the black-majority government and African National Congress (ANC) have strangled the working class under the tight grip of rampant capitalism. The film was selected to critically analyze Nelson Mandela and his political work with a "red eye." The participants included students, professors, current and retired workers from South America, Haiti, U.S., Africa and the Middle East.

The documentary shows how Mandela joined forces with President F. W. de Klerk claiming to "abolish apartheid" and establish multiracial elections in 1994, which has left the black majority in extreme poverty and still under brutal capitalism and segregation. In this compromised state, Mandela became President. He and the ANC had become the new faces of capitalism. Continuing dire poverty and misery demands communist revolution as the only real alternative.

The discussion was both sharp and informative. When asked: "How did Mandela serve the ruling class and capitalists by cooperating with de Klerk?" several people pointed out the contradiction that Mandela is portrayed by the Western ruling class and media as a hero to his people and an inspiration to all. All agreed that this documentary exposed a very different view of Mandela. Pilger's interviews and film clips of miners, and the dangerous and desperate conditions under which they live, really moved people to anger when contrasted with the excessive wealth of the South African ruling class portrayed in the film.

It becomes apparent from the documentary that, like many others who start out opposing colonial capitalist rulers, Mandela sold out to them in the end, striking a deal with de Klerk to cooperate and collaborate with the ruling class. A belief in nationalism often leads to new faces on capitalism, but only a working-class revolution can end it.

Our March movie, "The Price of Sugar," shows the organizing efforts of immigrant sugar cane cutters from Haiti against horrific working and living conditions in the Dominican Republic. The film reveals the crimes of the sugar capitalist Viccini family and the role of the Dominican and U.S. governments in perpetuating this racist exploitation.

In the documentary, we see the workers are under armed guard and not allowed to leave the plantation. They make 90¢ a day — but only in vouchers for the high-priced company store. They come to the Dominican Republic to hope for a better life, but their lives are like those of the first African slaves who were used in the Americas to cut sugar cane. Recently, the Dominican Constitutional Court ruled to strip citizenship from several generations of Dominicans of Haitian descent, including many who had come to cut cane and hope for a better life.

The discussion helped many understand the limits of reform movements. Without a class analysis, without communist revolution, the same system continues in power. Even if some workers burned down the plantations, the sugar capitalists still have their government and military to oppress the workers. One important point was how racism justifies cheap labor. Why do these subhuman conditions exist under capitalism? They exist to maximize bosses' profits from the labor of some workers while at the same time driving down the wages of all workers.

Both movies helped reach out to more people politically and spread the understanding that capitalism is a brutal system, which must be eliminated. Some joined us in NYC for May Day.✪

How Bosses Sabotage May Day

NEW YORK CITY, May 1 — There were two marches here today. The one in Union Square was dominated by pseudo-left parties and groups and included some immigrant and community organizations. The one at City Hall was led by the NY Central Labor Council and the Democratic Party. On the surface, they appeared to be very different. But in essence, they were similar. Both stripped May Day of its revolutionary content and both reflected their lack of confidence in the working class.

And this is no surprise! These marches were organized by professional misleaders who seek to divide our class and fight for scraps instead workers' power. A small PLP contingent marched, calling for a communist revolution. Many workers and passersby took the paper. A group of young women joined our chant, "Democrats, Republicans, All the Same. Racist Murder is the Name of the Game."

Reformist May Day

The rally in Union Square was a May Day marathon, with groups coming and going and speaker after speaker going on and on for more than 5 hours before marching down to Foley Square. There may have been 50 organizations participating, but few had more than two dozen people with them.

Meanwhile, at City Hall, about two dozen of the city's largest unions had signed on to the May Day Coalition for "Labor Rights — Immigrant Rights — Jobs for All." But with the exception of the Laborers' Union and CUNY Professional Staff Congress, there was little rank-and-file presence. With all the City unions entering contract talks, there was only a handful of transit workers and teachers. Healthcare and city workers' unions — with more than 350,000 mostly black and Latino workers combined, facing jobs cuts as a result of racist cutbacks — turned out only staff and officers and little else. A painfully long list of union honchos shared the stage with elected officials, sending the message that the future is bright with Mayor DeBlasio in City Hall.

Neither march mentioned racist police terror. Neither march had more than a handful of fast food workers or other low-wage workers. Neither march warned of the threat of growing imperialist wars. Neither march called for an end to racist unemployment. And neither march called for the building of a mass revolutionary communist movement.

Have Confidence in the Working Class

The PLP May Day march in Brooklyn was the exact opposite. It put revolutionary politics up front and for a few hours, took the streets in the black and immigrant neighborhood that on every other day is controlled by the racist police. People on the sidewalks saw themselves in our ranks, joined our chants English, Spanish, and Creole and embraced CHALLENGE, over thousands distributed.

Yes, we have a long way to go. But the contrast in the two days' events is a testimonial to our confidence in the workers and youth to grasp revolutionary communist ideas and make them their own. It is a testament to the strategy of building a base for communist ideas and for PLP. We have a very long way to go, but we are winning!✪

Profits Depend on Mass Murder of Miners

SOMA, Turkey, May 19 — "This is not something that suddenly happened. I can tell you that there are people here who are dying, people who are injured and it's all because of money…They send us here like lambs to slaughter. We are not safe doing this job."

That's what a surviving coal miner told CNN Turkey about the fire that officials claim killed 301 miners. The actual number will be much higher. He also accused a supervisor of giving the wrong directions to trapped miners, leading them away from the oxygen supply. This fire was not a random accident. It was mass industrial murder.

On May 13, just days after two U.S. coal miners were killed in a collapse in West Virginia, an underground coal fire in Soma knocked out the mine's elevators and ventilation system, trapping the miners in toxic fumes. It happened during shift change, with 787 miners in the mine. Some of the 301 bodies recovered so far were burned beyond recognition. More are still underground. Many who were rescued may not survive their injuries.

Another miner said of the official numbers, "We are not even counting outsiders who come here as part-time, unregistered workers," including many youth who turn to the mines due to extreme poverty and the high cost of education.

On April 29, during a hearing in Parliament, the government of Prime Minister Erdogan rejected a call for a safety inspection at the mine. And when he travelled to Soma the day after the explosion, Erdogan told angry mourners and relatives, "Explosions like this in these mines happen all the time."

Anti-government demonstrations broke out across the country. Student protests in Ankara and Istanbul led up to a one-day strike by the major trade unions on May 15. A march was held in Ankara from the Middle Eastern Technical University to the Energy Ministry. The marchers erupted in a rock-throwing protest in front of the headquarters of the ruling Justice and Development Party. In Istanbul, there were demonstrations in Taksim Square and young people laid down in the metro station, representing those killed in the mine. A demonstration of thousands was attacked by hundreds of riot police firing tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannons.

As a result of the mass actions of workers and youth, four mining company executives, including the manager, were arrested charged with causing multiple deaths and injuries through negligence.

U.S. Investors Reap Millions

Soma, with a population of around 100,000, is a major center for lignite coal mining. Turkey has rich supplies that are used for domestic power. The Energy Minister recently announced that Turkey would invest $118 billion by 2023 to meet their doubling energy consumption. According to Pieter Verstraete, a Türkiye Burslari Researcher at Bilgi University in Istanbul, these investments have been accompanied with privatization, deregulation and wage-cuts, to keep the mines profitable and attractive mainly to U.S. investors. The average wage for miners is only $500/month.

What these investors also find "attractive" is cutting safety costs, "flexible" work conditions, less training, and subcontracting unskilled and unregistered under-age workers. And it's not just the privatized mines. A report by the General Miners Union in March 2010 stated that between 2000-2009, there were 25,655 "accidents" in the state-owned mines of the Turkish Coal Corporation (TTK), and that 98 percent could have been prevented with proper training and safety inspections.

Such mining disasters due to bosses' profiteering at the expense of safety also occur worldwide. In 2010, 29 miners were killed in West Virginia.

But what's proper to the bosses is anything that generates more profits. Whether its hundreds of miners in Turkey — or more than 1,000 garment workers buried/burned alive in the factory collapse in Bangladesh, or coal miners in the U.S. —our lives are just the cost of doing business. And as horrible as these numbers are, they pale in the face of those being slaughtered by growing imperialist wars, poverty, and curable disease around the world. The best way to answer these murders is to rebuild the international movement for communist revolution. The truth is, nothing less will do.✪

Petraeus Leaves CUNY But Fight Continues



NEW YORK CITY, May 6 — Today a small squad of 30 City University of New York (CUNY) students and 10 faculty bid a noisy farewell to the hated mass murderer general David Petraeus. He has been masquerading as a professor for a year to cover his war crimes and his disgrace after a sex scandal drove him out as CIA director. This was his last public appearance here and chants of "Death Squads Petraeus, you can't hide, We charge you with genocide!" greeted him as he slunk into Macaulay Honors College behind a wall of uneasy administrators and city police.

"Drones" Petraeus is also chairman of the KKR Global Institute, Judge Widney professor at USC, senior fellow at Harvard, and co-chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations Task Force on North America. He recently co-published an article in *Politico* titled, "The Great American Comeback" where he argues that this racist country is on the cusp of a "great revival." This is exactly the kind of warrior scholar the ruling class desires, one who mucks up the minds of working-class youth with bourgeois ideas and practices.

Recently, Condoleezza Rice was forced to cancel her commencement address at Rutgers. Homeland Security czar Janet Napolitano faced big protests at the University of California. Now, Petraues leaves CUNY after a semester of pushback.

While the chants and speeches were spirited enough, PLP members were joined only by a few of our student and faculty friends and some leftists. It was good to protest Petraeus as he moves his warrior-scholar self to other colleges, and militant students did make his tenure here pretty uncomfortable. But the small numbers show that imperialist war, preparations for war, and the militarization of the capitalist university are not on most people's minds. We have a lot of work to do. This campaign was good practice for the Party's forces, young and veteran.

The campaign against the CUNY ROTC officer-training corps will continue in the Fall, along with a focus on opposing military research. The faculty/staff union has set up a Committee on Militarization and is considering a resolution against ROTC later this month. Faculty are working with students on events to make the danger of imperialist war better understood on CUNY campuses.

Our anger will continue to disrupt the use of the university by the war machine and the police state. PLP's view is that the bourgeois university, an integral part of the capitalist state, must be smashed along with its military power. Communist revolution will have to transform all levels of education so that it contributes, not to profit wars, but to a society capable of abolishing war.✪

PLP Marchers Plant Red Ideas

COLOMBIA

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA — A large group of workers, from different sectors, as well as students, farm workers, the unemployed, and right- and "left"-wing politicians, participated in May Day, a celebration of the International Workers' Day.

PLP's contingent of workers and students joined the march from two different places, since the march had three different starting points, in addition to the neighborhood marches. Over time May Day has become a phony left electoral event, manipulated by trade unions, which have turned it into a carnival of whistles, nationalist street theater, and support for reformist "democratic left" candidates.

In contrast, PLP enthusiastically chanted, "The History of Working-Class Struggle is Not in the Voting Boxes!" and "Believing in Elections is Waiting to be Let Down!"

There was also lots of support for peace, undoubtedly because of the dialogue between the government and the insurgency in Havana. In the face of this, we chanted, "Peace is a tool of the state while they kill the workers!" and, "Peace between social classes at the service of the criminal bosses!" among others. We also talked to many workers who put their faith in democratic changes, explaining that the ever-changing capitalist puppets are only interested in enriching themselves from the labor of our class. That was the reason we chanted, "Against capitalist robbery, a communist Workers' State!" and "No more reformism, long live communism!"

We marched waving our red flags and chanting our slogans that elicited curiosity and admiration for our political message such as, "Racism, Sexism, and Wage Slavery, Scourges of the International Working Class!" We distributed a thousand flyers detailing the revolutionary politics of our Party and sold our newspaper CHALLENGE as we arrived at Bolivar Square singing *the Internationale*. We made some contacts amongst participants, whom we plan to visit to advance our politics. We also realized that we must engage in more ideological debate with more workers and friends, calling for unity, and through our program turn these pacifist marches into militant struggles for communist ideas.✪

MEXICO



MEXICO, May 1 — On May Day, 30 members and friends of PLP marched in two cities, Mexico City and Oaxaca. We distributed around 6,000 communist flyers, chanted our slogans and sang our revolutionary songs: *The Internationale* and *Bella Ciao*. Amongst a sea of phony leftists and reformists, it's significant that PLP put forth the direct struggle for communism and publicly called workers to join us, the international communist revolutionary party.

The slogan painted on our banner read: "Imperialists: You can't stop the unity of the international working class." This reflected the deep understanding developed by the working mother who painted it. During the march the two contingents at our sides, one of health workers and the other from a trade union, chanted our communist slogans.

On the days before the march, we had a communist event in two working-class neighborhoods, where we discussed the need for PLP. The majority of the participants were young people. Two came to the march with us. One thanked us for the invitation, and said he liked to see the way communists organize.

Summarizing our activities leading to May Day, we'll refer to the words of one of our comrades who said: "Now, the year really starts for us; what are we going to do to make the next May Day better?"

The current period is difficult, imperialist war and fascism will make the struggle harder. However, the foresight of this comrade along with the workers' commitment, such as that of the workers who marched with our Party, will put an end to the capitalist darkness. To the final victory! Long live communism!✪

At LA May Day
Teacher, Transit Worker Declare: 'Join the Fight!'

LOS ANGELES, CA — Excerpts from two speeches at this year's May Day dinner:

At the school where I work, just in this past school year, an extremely anti-teacher (really, anti-worker) environment has displaced, laid-off and harassed over 20 teachers out of 80 (equaling about 100 classes and impacting over 300 students every day.) With this destabilized environment, added to the daily racism our students face in our mainly black and brown community, it is no wonder that the student body has a hard time concentrating. It is clear that the school bosses do not truly want our students to learn, no matter what they say…It's in the bosses' interests to make students and teachers fight each other and not work together to fight this rotten system.

…It is also our job to push class struggle forward so that the working class can learn through practice how to fight the bosses collectively, and also that fighting for reforms is never going to be enough. This can only be done if we have an organization, like Progressive Labor Party. As always, our strength lies in a united working class fighting for the same goal: nothing less than true communist revolution! Join us. As Karl Marx said, "We have nothing to lose but our chains!

★ ★ ★ ★

The work that we are doing on my job in transit is concentrated on having a very strong core of people who are ready to stand up to the constant push and squeeze by the bosses. Right now it seems that the masses of workers have either been lulled to sleep or been scared into being passive. These types of ideas are exactly what we as a Party are fighting against. With a strong, energized core of comrades we can overcome these problems inside and outside the workplace.

It's that strength and fearlessness that drew me to the PLP, made me make the decision this year to join the Party, and also convinced me that the fight for communist revolution is the only way for workers to rise up. So rise up out of your seats of complacency, step out of the shadows of fear and shout the workers united will never be defeated! Join the fight, and join PLP!

This year's May Day dinner had a principled and steadfast group of comrades in attendance. About 40 people ate, socialized, listened to speeches and poems, sang and danced to political music and renewed our fighting spirit. When we have a strong core like this one, who are ready and willing to put themselves on the line to further the struggle for workers' power, PLP has the best potential to grow and advance class struggle. Now we should put that potential into action and do our best within this difficult period of history to grow our numbers. Our summer activities should help and push us to advance our politics. Everyone at the dinner felt inspired to help organize and contribute to PLP's summer plans.

In our contingent of the May Day march, we waved our red flags high and chanted "Obreros Unidos, Jamás Serán Vencidos" (The Workers United Will Never Be Defeated) and "La Lucha Obrera No Tiene Frontera" (The Workers' Struggle Has No Border.) We distributed CHALLENGE and marched with friends and potential comrades beside us in solidarity.

Thousands of people marched on May 1 to the detention center downtown. Workers are furious at the staggering numbers of immigrants being deported daily. This detention center, along with the basement of the Immigration building next door, holds hundreds of immigrants at any given time before they are deported or sent to wait for months in larger detention centers throughout California and Arizona. Many of these detention centers are under investigation for abuse and mistreatment of detainees.

In 2013, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) reported deporting 368,644 people. In 2012, they reported detaining 478,000 and deporting 419,000. These numbers are astounding.

Most detainees are originally from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador — even though statistics show that just as many immigrants come from India and the Philippines. This criminalization of the workers from Latin America by ICE parallels the criminalization of black youth by the cops. The incarceration of both Latino and black workers has been business as usual for the U.S. bosses.

Black, Latino, Asian, and white workers should join together in the fight against racism and this horrible capitalist system. May Day is the day to start the fight, and one day we will finish it! Long Live Communism!✪



LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Bosses' Profits Caused Mudslide, Not 'Act of God'

After a massive mudslide wiped out dozens of homes in Washington State's Snohomish County, officials lined up to write the event off as an accident of fate. "It was considered very safe. This was a completely unforeseen slide. This came out of nowhere," said the head of the county Department of Emergency Management. The County Executive and Public Works Director concurred: "A slide of this magnitude is very difficult to predict. There was no indication, no indication at all." (Seattle Times, 3/24)

Of course these statements were all lies. County officials had known since at least 1950 that this hill — known in government documents and local lore as "Hazel Landslide" and "Landslide Hill" — posed a constant danger of landslides. Landslides struck the hill in 1949, 1951, 1967, and 2006. Geomorphologist Daniel Miller, who wrote a report on the hill in 1999 for the Army Corps of Engineers, told the Seattle Times, "We've known it would happen at some point. We just didn't know when." Indeed dozens of reports have been filed with the county regarding the growing instability of a hill whose slide zone had increased dramatically over the last fifty years.

So why did the county keep granting building permits to developers? After the 2006 mudslide, Miller revisited the area and was "shocked" to see a new development being built there, "We've known that it's been failing. It's not unknown that this hazard exists." In the last days of the housing boom that came before the current economic depression, the desire of the county to give over land to pad the enormous profits of real estate developers was greater than the concern for any of the people who might live in the homes on Landslide Hill.

Now 41 people are dead and two are still missing. The body count will most assuredly rise as more of the area is uncovered. Why did these people die? To increase the profits of the capitalist class. Yet the lack of class consciousness in this country has forced residents to accept this fate with a cynical fatalism. As one resident whose house was destroyed noted, "Nobody was warning anybody" but it was "an unrealistic expectation" to think the county could have done anything to prevent the disaster.

"That's like saying the river is going to flood. If the hillsides are going to slough away, they were going to slough away. That's kind of what happens around here."

The working class deserves better. This disaster could and should have been avoided. No homes should have ever been built on this unstable ground. The Snohomish mudslide is proof that capitalism cannot and will not provide for the working class.

Red Beard

PatRIOTism: Rulers' Poison that Kills Millions

What gives you a feeling of patriotism?

Patriotism: devoted love, support, and defense of one's country, national loyalty.

Internationalism: a policy of cooperation among nations.

Internationalism: a policy of cooperation among workers of all nations.

I prefer the latter.

There is a RIOT in the middle of Patriotism.

As an anti-war fighter for most of my adult life, patriotism is not one of my strong points. I always feel uncomfortable standing up in public for the National Anthem. All countries need patriotism in order to fight wars. Bosses need blind obedience from their youth to lay down their lives. Many wars are fought to control the oil or the pipelines. The beneficiaries of these wars are big oil companies like Exxon-Mobil, Chevron, BP and others on Wall Street.

In the beginning of a war, patriotism is a mile wide in all directions but it is only a fourth of an inch thick. At the sight of hundreds of body bags, the patriotism evaporates quickly. So the rulers of all countries must build up nationalism constantly.

Our children in schools are taught the Pledge of Allegiance very early on. In high school and college, we hear the National Anthem before sporting events. If you do not stand, you risk being ostracized. At professional sporting events, we are subjected to the same things.

Even at the Stockton Symphony, many stood up when patriotic music was played. The song may have been "Stand up for the USA." Then the performers "The Texas Tenors" wanted to recognize all the veterans who had fought in the wars to make "our country free."

Many social gatherings are turned into nationalistic propaganda gatherings. There is no mention of innocent workers and women and children worldwide being slaughtered for oil. We are fighting in an imperialist war for the rulers to control the assets of other countries. Imperialism sees the working class, foreign and domestic, as the enemy.

It is very hard for me to be patriotic, to view myself as an american in the same boat with other americans such as bank presidents, Wall street executives, and generals who plan wars executions and evictions every day.

I identify with bus drivers, construction workers, teachers and other workers in Egypt, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Israel/Palestine. I view myself as a member of the international working class.

Veteran

Why I Joined PLP: 'Done watching capitalism destroy our lives'

Excerpt from NYC's Why I Joined PLP *Speech*

What does capitalism mean?

You gotta fight back!

Capitalism means?

You gotta fight back!

All of us, every single one of us has gone through the indoctrination machine, the behemoth which attempts to crush you from all sides, the machine which tries to dehumanize you and destroys any semblance of hope in our unity. The monster that makes it seem that going down capitalism lane is the only way forward, even though we're carrying the entire world on our backs, seeing ourselves dying every step of the way. I knew that things were bad but I was told to put my faith in the system which causes this destruction, that I'd just have to wait as either a politician, or the market, or a charity, or god fixed everything that was wrong with our world!

I was told to put my faith in capitalism as I saw my family break their backs to support us.

I was told to put my faith in capitalism as I lived one paycheck away from homelessness every week.

I was told to put my faith in capitalism as I saw my mother work harder and harder, yet have less self-worth every day.

I remember asking my mother why she thought we were poor. She told me that it's because she wasn't smart enough, that she didn't work hard enough. And our entire life she had been bearing the burden of our poverty completely on her shoulders, blaming herself every step of the way.

I told her that it wasn't her fault — that the system wasn't set up for us to be happy. It was set up for us and those like us to be slaves and the few to be the slavemasters. And she understood, because she isn't stupid even though capitalism tells her she is every day. And we aren't stupid. We can see how capitalism is destroying us and we know it needs to be taken down and yet still, I was told to put my faith in capitalism.



Long had I realized the very thing which I've been told would solve all problems in our world was in fact the root of the issue and — I was done waiting for capitalism to solve all our problems. I was done watching as capitalism destroyed humanity. I was done seeing my life become more and more commodified, objectified, and meaningless under this system of oppression. And for a long time, I just didn't know what I should do to fight back.

But a year ago I was met with this beautiful idea, one that was quite compelling, that had me slapping my forehead saying, "Why wasn't I able to articulate this before?"

The people I met, who helped me learn about it, spoke with such fervor it was hard to ignore. For the first time since the years my mother would tell me, "Hijo, you could become anything you want, anything that'll make you happy," I was filled with hope a rare and wondrous emotion which capitalism makes much too uncommon.

And one year ago today, I did become something that made me happy. I became a communist, and joined the struggle with my working-class brothers and sisters. I dedicated my life to the pursuit of a world which actually makes sense and takes care of everyone and everything in it.

Since I joined I've grown as both an individual and as a part of the collective. I've made friends that I will have for life. And I know when s*** goes down, all of you will have my back as I will have yours. Because this isn't some club of loosely connected people. This is the working class this is a communist party ready to take it all down. That's why I joined the Progressive Labor Party.

Now, even if you've been in the Party for long time, I ask you to recommit to the working class. And if you haven't joined yet, I ask you to think about it, because no one is going to fight this fight for us. If we don't do it soon, they'll be nothing to fight for. So join the Progressive Labor Party, and fight for communism!

Winter Soldier Portrays Pentagon As Victim, Not War-making Villain

Captain America: The Winter Soldier, the sequel to 2011's *The First Avenger*, set records for an April movie opening, bringing in close to $100 million. The movie is a two-hour long special effects blow-out, which Hollywood expects to bring in massive revenue.

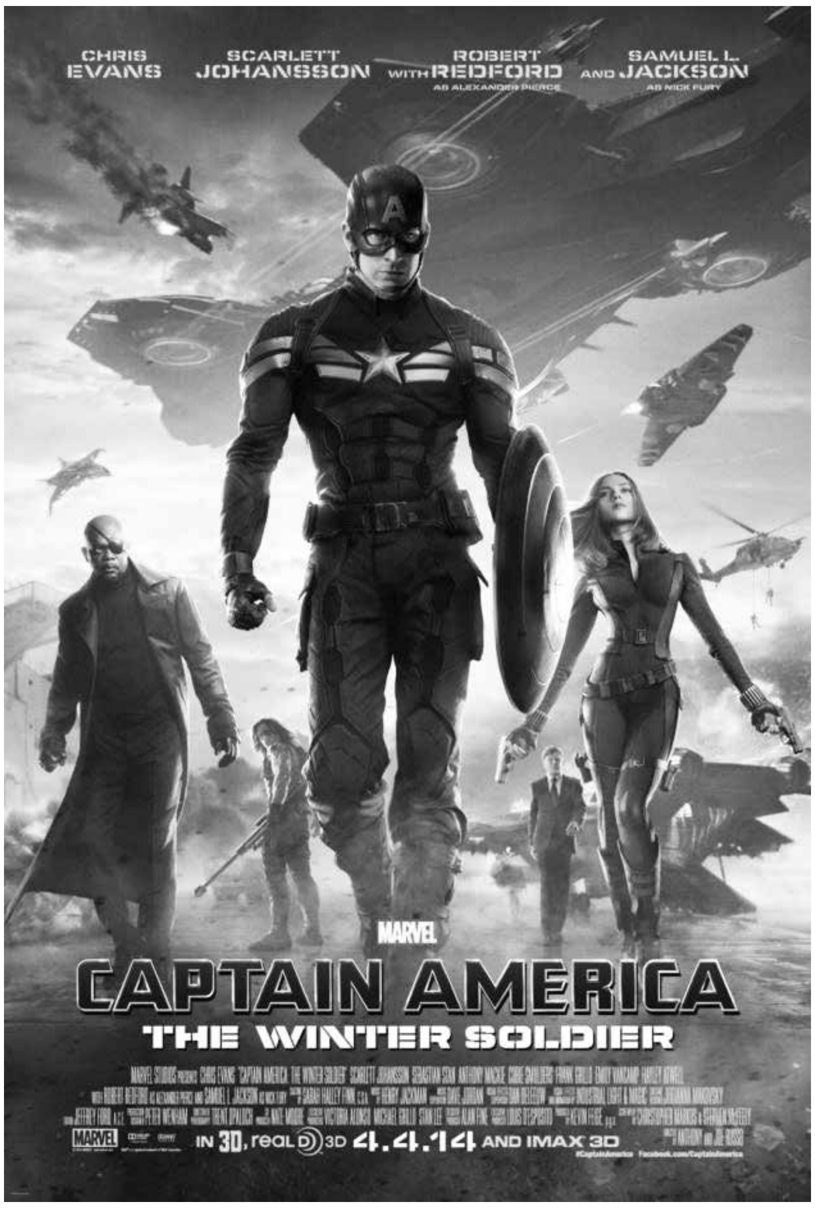
Trading on the recent trend of comic-book movies that take their source material seriously, *The Winter Soldier* dabbles in some current themes that might surprise those skeptical of Hollywood blockbusters. SHIELD, the super-secret security agency that Captain America belongs to, is revealed to be not all that it seems, as its secrecy is shown to make it prone to extraordinary abuses. It is clear that SHIELD's mission is a metaphor for the war on terrorism and the abuses that have come from it. Revealing SHIELD's secrets is seen as a great act of heroism, an allusion to Edward Snowden's leak of NSA documents.

Still, these themes play second fiddle to the most popular notion in American action films, the siege mentality. At no point in *The Winter Soldier* (or any film in the Marvel Comics empire) is the world — and by world they naturally mean the United States, since no other part of the world is ever shown on screen — not in mortal danger. Even as we learn that a secret military organization threatens our "freedom" (that amorphous concept at the center of all patriotic films), we discover that there actually are massive evil conspiracies to enslave people. So where does that leave us?

Whether the enemy is terrorism, the national enemy du jour (Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, take your pick), crime, drugs or the fiscal cliff, we are kept in a constant state of fear by the media, and politicians. With so much fear-mongering it is easy to forget that the United States spends more on its military than the next ten biggest spenders combined. Movies like *The Winter Soldier* show a U.S. in constant danger of attack, but the historical facts show that it is the rest of the world that is in constant danger of attack from the United States.

In short, *The Winter Soldier* helps to perpetuate an image of the U.S. military as the victim of a dangerous world rather than as the imperialist villain that makes the world more dangerous. This inversion of victims and victimizers is an important ideological victory that justifies absurd military expenditures while quieting dissent against increasing U.S. military adventures abroad.

In *The Winter Soldier* the U.S. military mission can be salvaged so long as noble soldiers like Captain America are in charge of it. This is a vision of the world in which imperialism doesn't exist as a concept and the villains are not bankers out to maximize profits, but evil-doers who do evil for evil's sake. These movies construct a fantasy that the U.S. working class is supposed to live within, where uncomfortable questions of class and power never crop up. Far from mindless entertainment, these movies present an oversimplified view of the world that serves capitalism.✪



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

N.Y.U.'s newest 'campus': Abu Dhabi slave labor camp

NYT, 5/ 19 — ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates — The strike had entered its second day when construction workers at Labor Camp 42 got word that their bosses…had come to negotiate. Mohammed Amir Waheed Sirkar, an electrician from Bangladesh, scrambled…to meet them. But when he got to the courtyard, he saw the truth: It wasn't the bosses….It was the police.

They pounded on doors…and hauled dozens of men to prison. Mr. Sikar was taken to a Dubai police station….New officers arrived. That's when things got rough.

"They beat me up," he said…"asking me to confess I was involved in starting the strike." Others were slapped, kicked, or beaten with shoes, a special indignity in Arab culture.

After nine days in jail, Mr. Sikar was deported, as were hundreds of other workers.

The forceful response was typical for the United Arab Emirates, where strikes are illegal and labor conditions grim, but most of the men who went on strike last October were working…on a large new campus for New York University….

… [In] a country where…labor can resemble indentured servitude….virtually every [worker]…said he had to pay recruitment fees up to a year's wages to get his job and had never been reimbursed….Most…described having to work 11 or 12 hours a day, six or seven days a week….The men said they were not allowed to hold onto their passports….[and] lived in squalor, 15 men to a room….

NYU is America's largest private university.

Obama judicial nominee upholds Confederate battle emblem

Associated Press, 5/16 — The Obama administration's nomination of Michael P. Boggs to the federal bench….faced sharp questioning…into…[Boggs'] past support for state proposals to post information online about doctors who perform abortions and to keep the Confederate battle emblem on the Georgia flag.

Capitalist climate never changes

NYT, 4/21 — Next year, in December, delegates from more than 190 nations will gather in Paris to take another shot at completing a new global treaty on climate change. This will be the 21st Conference of the Parties under United Nations auspices since the first summit meeting in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

For the most part, these meetings have been exercises in futility….

Arab Spring began with miners' strike, not vendor's death

NYT, 4/14 — GAFSA, Tunisia — Tunisians…say the first uprising of the Arab Spring began not in 2010 after the self-immolation of a fruit vender…but in 2008, when protests over corrupt hiring practices at the mines of Gafsa ran on for six months….People here are still in revolt.

…Protests have idled the phosphate mines — a cornerstone of the economy — for much of the last three years. Citizens regularly block roads and burn tires….

"We will never stop this strike until we get a job," said Bashir Mabrouki, 28, in a group of young people…guarding a barricade of rocks and scrap metal that blocked shipments last month. "We are being played by the government and their fake promises…."

Here in Tunisia…more than 30 percent of young people cannot find work….

The same complaints that compelled the revolt against the dictatorship — of poverty and pollution, a lack of…electricity and clean water, and corruption in parceling out…jobs — continue to animate the protests against Tunisia's new technocratic government….

Workers and their families have forsaken their bonuses to join the protests of the unemployed….

"There is no social justice," said Mohammad Nasir Saidi….He directs his anger against the government. They are stealing our natural resources….They do not care about the people…."

…A mining engineer said, "2008….was very violent. [The workers] had practically been slaves since the French colonial period. It was revenge for everything."

Pensions for millions: 7 years from wipe-out

NYT, 4/13 — The pensions of millions of Americans are being threatened because of trouble in a part of the retirement world long considered so safe that no one gave it a second thought.

The pensions belong to people in multi-employer plans — big pooled investment funds with many sponsoring companies and a union. Multi-employer pensions are not only backed by federal insurance, but they were also thought to be even more secure than single-company pensions because when one company in a multi-employer pool failed, the others were required to pick up its "orphaned" retirees.

Today, however, the aging of the workforce, the decline of unions, deregulation and two big stock crashes have taken a grievous toll on multi-employer pensions, which cover over 10 million Americans. Dozens of…plans have already failed and some giant ones are teetering — including…the Teamster Central States pension plan with more than 400,000 members.

In February, the Congressional Budget Office projected that the federal multi-employer insurer would run out of money in seven years, which would leave retirees in failed plans with nothing.

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

How Enemies of Communism Destroyed the GPCR and Workers' Lives

Progressive Labor Party was established in 1965, just one year before the start of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Our Chinese comrades influenced our political line and inspired our work. They showed us the critical importance of breaking with revisionism — the fake-leftist ideology, put forward by "capitalist roaders," that actually serves the bosses. They demonstrated the power of the collective. They taught us the importance of leadership from the masses, and the need to rely on workers over elite experts and technocrats. The Chinese comrades' experience also underlined the danger of keeping remnants of capitalism — like money and wages — in a worker-run state, and how these elements pave the road to revisionism and the return of full-blown capitalism.

The first three parts of this first-person account told the story of a Chinese village factory and its workers—how their lives were changed by the Cultural Revolution and changed again by the CR's reversal. Part Four illustrates the widening inequalities as Chinese society has continued to deteriorate since the Cultural Revolution was defeated.

Guan Dunxiao, another who bought a share of the village factory, became the most successful entrepreneur in our county. In 1987, he paid close to one million yuan in taxes. As the county's biggest taxpayer, he was invited to join the Communist Party and became deputy chairman of the county's political consultation conference. Most of the workers from the original factory left him.

Guan Dunxiao helped his younger brother, Guan Dunjia, who was only a teenager when I worked at the factory, take over the county's bus operation. This eventually earned him twenty million yuan a year.

Guan Dunyan, the manager before me, left the factory as soon as Deng Xiaoping began to privatize collective assets. He sold things on the markets and used the money to buy land when the price was very low. He now lives off the land he bought in the early days and rented to others to build factories.

Altogether, there are now a dozen people in the village with assets over one hundred million yuan. One-third of the villagers are millionaires; another third live comfortably; the rest are struggling to survive.

Among the losers, a few stand out. Fu Xisan, the man who advised me not to go college, died in his fifties of liver cancer three months after the village factory was privatized. He put more than ten years of his life into the factory and was devastated by what happened there. Many people thought he died of anger. When I went to see his family on my winter break, his widow said sadly, "The village has really changed since you left."

Wang Siyong, one of my earlier colleagues in the factory, fared badly as well. He was two years older than I, and we'd played together as boys. We worked on the same eighth production team. After the factory was privatized, Wang left to set up his own enterprise. But his operation failed. On top of that, his brother-in-law, who'd been working for him, ran away with a lot of money. Wang was buried in debt. He sold the family house and everything he owned to pay his creditors. He died in his early forties, leaving behind a wife and two daughters to fend for themselves without him.

Liu Enxun was the factory electrician in the early years. After privatization, he went to work for Guan Dunxiao. But his wife fell seriously ill, and for years Liu spent all his income on her medical treatments. Eventually his wife died. Whenever I met him, he would tell me he was the poorest man in the village and relied on government relief money to get enough to eat.

Liu's younger brother, Liu Qixun lived in similar poverty and had a tragic life. His only son was killed by a traffic accident at the age of 15. His distraught wife left him to live in another place. Just one year older than me, he had aged beyond his years.

Wang Xuejin, the secret weapon, had his share of sadness as well. His oldest son, Wang Daying, was a highly intelligent person and a talented painter and musician. He could listen to a new song once and play it back on his erhu, the two-stringed Chinese fiddle. But he was socially awkward and found it difficult to get up in the morning. When we worked in the fields together, I would wake him up every morning. After I went to work in the factory, somebody else did the same. But once the collective was broken up, nobody bothered to wake him anymore.

In the end, his wife divorced him and left the village with their son. Wang Daying became depressed and in 1998 he hanged himself. For Wang Xuejin, it was a great tragedy in his old age to bury his beloved son.

Fu Xisan was the first person to die prematurely of disease in fifteen years in my village. But several others soon followed him. Wang Fangjun died in 1980, in his 40s; his half-brother Lu Sihai, in 1982, in his 30s; Guan Dunxie in 1983, in his 50s; Liu Chengrui in 1985, in his 40s. All of these men were from my old production team. Other teams in the village suffered similar losses.

Why were all these people dying young? Once the collective was broke up, it marked the end of free medical care and free education in the village. Our sense of community was gone, and everybody was struggling to get ahead. The stress of competition took its toll on the people. The disintegration of our village is a microcosm of how China fell apart after the defeat of the GPCR.✪

